

THE BLESSING OF A TEMPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

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I begin with thanks. First, heart-felt thanks to our Heavenly Father for this beautiful new temple. I know that the Lord has inspired prophets to bring a temple to us and choose its location. He prompted generous donors to provide the means with which to build this sacred edifice. And he guided its design and construction to a successful completion. I also know that we will be eternally blessed if we will but fulfill the purposes for which this Holy Temple is intended.

I also express thanks to the youth of our temple district who so beautifully portrayed our pioneer heritage of faith, dedication, and endurance in the temple celebration. Five years ago we were grasping tightly to the pioneer legacy of our past, when suddenly our reach was extended. Robert Browning said, “Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what’s a Heaven for.” Now the Lord has invited us to extend our reach through greater opportunities for eternal growth and peace through sacred service in His house. Our quest for eternal peace continues on a daily basis in our homes, in our hearts, and in our temple worship.

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Since that day in 2003 when we heard the announcement that a temple would be built here in Rexburg, the people of the Upper Valley have eagerly awaited the great day of culmination, the day of completion—the day of dedication. We watched as more than eight thousand people gathered for the groundbreaking ceremonies in 2005. We sensed then that the temple site already had a sacred feeling about it. The fertile topsoil carefully removed that day was preserved for later use, so as not to waste its power to nourish growth. Precisely placed explosives rearranged the lava, excavating space for the foundation and lower floor. Workers removed dirt and debris from the excavation site with all the tender loving care of a mother preparing a home for family reunion at Christmas time. They swept and vacuumed the rocks and filled cracks in the stone with cement, to build the temple on a clean and strong foundation. Now the walls are strong, the roof impermeable to storms, the spire straight and tall. And atop Moroni sounds forth the welcoming call to all, “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto...every nation, kindred, tongue and people” (Revelation 14:6).

As the day of dedication neared, it was evident that every possible effort had been expended to make the House of the Lord a fit place for the Lord to visit—an environment as much like his as we can make.

First, though, we opened the temple to mortal visitors. Over ten thousand people volunteered to prepare and present the temple, representing

the feelings of the saints for all who toured the edifice. They helped the visitors understand why we treasure this blessing of the temple—a place for the deepest and most meaningful part of our worship. Over 204,000 people attended the open house and absorbed the spirit they felt there.

Now that the Rexburg Idaho Temple is dedicated, we may enjoy its blessings in our midst. I pray that we shall utilize it to its fullest extent. The temple is now even more conveniently placed for us, that more of our time may be spent in actual temple service rather than in temple travel. May that hour we save in travel time now be dedicated to our eternal progress by faithful participation in family history research and vicarious temple ordinances. The lives of generations yet unborn, as well as generations past, will benefit from the saving ordinances that will take place within its walls.

Yes—since man’s reach does exceed his grasp, I know what heaven’s for! Just as this temple is built well, so must we build well our lives to reach our eternal potential. The temple teaches us of our potential. As we learn to feel comfortable in the House of the Lord, I know that we prepare to be feel comfortable in the Father’s presence, the Celestial Kingdom. ∞

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